

CHILD LABOR AS MINISTER SEES IT

Rev. William Hedley Reads Able Paper on One of Most Important Sociological Problems.

IT IS "COMMERCIALISM"

This, According to Mr. Hedley, Is Cause of This Crime Against Society.

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.) DANVILLE, VA., January 26.—Rev. William Hedley, a pastor of this city, recently read before the Ministerial Union here, composed of the pastors of all denominations, on "Child Labor," and all present sought Mr. Hedley to furnish the paper for publication, and unanimously decided to request space for it in The Times-Dispatch. They regarded it as a very clear and able discussion of an important economic and sociological question. The paper is given here in full:

"In discussing this question, I wish to take the broad view of the issues that are involved. The subject is, indeed, a great one, whether considered as an economic, social or a moral problem; whether considered from the standpoint of the individual as a unit or of the nation as an aggregation. So I beg that you will not consider isolated exceptions to the general conditions which I shall endeavor to describe as being germane to the matter before us. There may be good-natured drunkards, drunkards who do violence to no man, and who do not beat their wives and children; there were doubtless indulgent slaveholders; there may be humane employers of children; but these conditions do not justify either intemperance and slavery on the one hand, or child labor on the other. Again, this question is not sectional. Almost every manufacturing State in the Union sins against its children. While I am an ardent advocate of the doctrine of 'States' rights,' and while I hold to that theory from conviction and not hereditarily, I do not maintain that propaganda to the seceding point. If wrongs cannot be righted save by Federal enactment, I am willing to make concessions in the interest of righteousness. If a Federal law is in order to regulate commerce, I am open to conviction that a similar law may be in order to regulate morals. In the way of a national divorce law or a national child-labor law, the matter is of purely fundamental importance. It deserves—may, it demands—consideration in a broad, comprehensive spirit. It is a problem for statesmen to solve, not politicians."

2. The American type of slavery was never so bad, say, as the Spanish. It was not conspicuously cruel, save in exceptional cases, which call for no special notice, chiefly because of their rarity. But it was too bad to be tolerated. The condition of child labor in this country is not to be compared, in respect to its shameful, with what prevailed in England two generations ago. But it is too bad to be permitted."

There are several ways of presenting this subject to your notice. It would be possible to harrow your feelings by relating incidents about little girls abused from sleep by having cold water dashed in their faces; that they might be up betimes to work in Southern mills; about the bitter experience of little girls and boys in New York sweat-shops; about shocking revelations of the hardships of little boys in Pennsylvania coal mines. Sentiment is a mighty power in some quarters, and pitiful tales of suffering have an appealing force. Such instances are exceptional, however, in all probability, and to make them typical of prevailing conditions would be to exaggerate. The bare facts are bad enough; there is no need to weaken one's case by overstating it. Besides, to unduly emphasize the wretched side of this matter, to make the suffering entailed the point of contention, is to practically assert that if the evil features of child labor were ameliorated or removed, the institution might be permitted to remain.

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We are on the same platform in respect to child labor that we occupy in respect to the liquor traffic. We do not want to see it improved; we want to see it abolished.

Thousands Working.

It will be in order to say at this point that there are 24,000 children under fourteen years of age working in Southern mills; that there are thousands of children at the age of eight and nine years working in Pennsylvania coal mines; that there are thousands under fourteen years of age working in the textile and in the glass-blowing factories of New Jersey; and that in that State many children of six years of age work sixteen hours a day. To come closer home, Virginia is not above suspicion, and Danville is not innocent of demanding its share of the strength and blood of its children, that they may add to its supposed commercial prosperity. These facts are bad enough, but here is one that is worse: the number of children that is employed in the various States is steadily increasing.

Listen to me! For the twenty years preceding 1900 the number of boys of from ten to fifteen years of age employed in factories throughout the land increased proportionately twice as fast as the population increased. The number of girls so employed increased proportionately three times as fast as the population increased. Since 1900 there are indications that the increase has been even more marked. New York official reports show an increase of 33 per cent. between 1890 and 1905. Pennsylvania showed an increase of factory children of 25 per cent. in 1904. There are 12,000 boys under fourteen years working in the hard-coal breakers, and 10,000 under sixteen in the soft-coal mines of that State at the present time. Iowa has increased its army of working children 32 per cent. in six years. These are lamentable facts, but they are facts, and show a deplorable situation. Yet it is apparent that this situation has not grown up in a day. It is the result of a cause that has been working its ravages in our social fabric.

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ric. What is that cause? As I see it, it is "commercialism." Two parties are here involved. The capitalist is one. Child labor is cheaper than adult labor; it earns larger dividends. A thousand pitiful tales of Northern speculators and Southern stockholders will tell you that the children, who must forfeit happiness, health, and real prosperity, that the rich may become richer. The facts are too painfully evident that the love of money is at the root of this, as of several other evils. But I am unwilling to lay the blame entirely upon the "bloated capitalist," and that for two reasons. I do not purpose playing the demagogue. It is no part of the business of any one, much less of the minister of the gospel, to set class against class. In the second place, I have some regard for truth. The capitalist is not alone to blame. He shares in respect to responsibility for prevailing conditions with the parents of the children who allow their offspring to work at a tender age. The child is seen to have a wage-earning capacity. Visions of the few dollars that the child may bring home at the end of the week hides all else—the benefit of a better trained hand, of a better

Our History Contest

January is almost over. Next Sunday there will be a new set of history questions, and the Sunday following the name of the winning contestant will be announced.

As the year progresses interest should deepen, for the time grows ever shorter before the opening of the Jamestown Exposition comes, and all who desire to live over intelligently the events of 1607, which the exposition is intended to commemorate, cannot be too thoroughly versed in the events of early Colonial history in Virginia.

January papers must be in by the 30th of the month. February questions will be published on Sunday, February 24, the prize answers and the name of the successful candidate to follow on Sunday, February 10th.

January Questions.

- (a) When was "A True Relation of Virginia," by John Smith, written?
(b) What ship carried it to London, and where was it published?
- (a) Which of Smith's works bearing on Virginia was published in 1612?
(b) What was the distinguishing characteristic of Smith's style?
- (a) What American romance has a place in his writings?
(b) What Indian chief led the Indians in the massacre of the English in 1622?
- (a) How many of the English settlers in Virginia were killed?
(b) What prevented the extermination of the Jamestown colony at this time?
- (a) What effect did the massacre have in England?
- How did the Virginians carry out the instructions of the London Council?
- When did King James announce his determination to resume supreme control of Colonial affairs in Virginia, and why?
- What was the result of the visit of English commissioners, appointed to investigate the condition of the Virginia Colony, when they came to Jamestown?
- When did Virginia again become a royal province, and by what means?
- What the Virginia Company had been dissolved in 1624, to what was the government of the colony entrusted?
- Who was made Governor of Virginia, and what body was associated with him?
- What was the style and title of the popular body thus created?
- (a) Who succeeded Wyatt as Governor in 1626, and what prominent men were made members of the council at that time?
(b) Who was appointed Secretary of State?
- What exclusive right was conferred upon Virginia by Charles I.?
- What was the yearly export of tobacco from Virginia in 1627, and how many immigrants arrived that year?
- (a) When did Yearley die, and where is he supposed to be buried?
(b) Who succeeded Yearley as Governor?
- When was the first election of Virginia Burgesses under the crown held?
- What answer did this General Assembly make to Charles I., and how many signatures were affixed to the answer?
- Who took Governor West's place in Virginia when he went to England in 1629?
- How did the Virginia Colonists greet Lord Baltimore when he came to Jamestown, and why?
- What royal Governor arrived in 1630, and what did the beginning of his administration mark?

equipped mind, and the blessedness of a life of larger usefulness.

Mission of a Child.

It is unspeakably sad when we fail to see the mission of the child. He is the messenger of God to bring light into the home. This very dependence is the power that is to destroy the self-interest by arousing to action the latent ministry of service within us. Alas for our progress when we forget the oracles of God! "The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children" (1 Cor. x, 12). Yet we have forgotten them! The child has come to be valued because he is a commercial asset. The "dinner-toter" is a familiar figure in our day. The father who takes the dinner pail to the children who support him in his idleness is so common a citizen—save the mark—that when some genius struck the situation off in a homely doggerel, all the nation joined in the chorus:

"Everybody works but father,
He sits around all day."

A song of that type depends for its popularity on its aptness. It was a palpable hit because it struck a responsive chord. The parents, I submit, are culpable in this matter, as are the capitalists.

I know that these are cases where the child's wages are needed to keep the home together, but such cases are in the minority. We must ever seek to do the greatest good to the greatest number.

Now, strange to say, it is at this point—and the strongest, too, that the advocates of child labor can advance—the home for the child laborer, who is, in fact, a wage-earner, and falls. The economic justification for child labor is a fallacy. From the standpoint of the parent child labor is an economic fallacy. When a child is taken away from school while young, he is simply condemned for life to the lowest commercial status. He can only do what everybody can do. What everybody can do, no one gets well paid for doing. His earning capacity is permanently crippled. Moreover a sufficient supply of child labor lowers the wages of adult labor. This is the inevitable result. So the parent is doubly in his own right in making his child a wage-earner. He destroys the child's ultimate earning capacity; he curtails his own earning capacity.

On the part of the capitalist, child labor is a financial blunder. What makes the American workman the superior of all competitors? His intelligence. What makes American goods command the markets of the world? They are the product of brains. Now, if the American workman is not educated, if his intelligence is not trained, if, in other words, he is not sent to school when a boy and kept there a reasonable length of time, if child labor continues, the standard of American goods will fall, the demand will fall, and the shrewd, far-seeing capitalist will be sheltering under the beneficent wing of the bankruptcy act. From the standpoint of the capitalist, child labor is an economic blunder. I urge this point at this length because the pocketbook argument is the only kind that appeals to some people, and it is fatal with most of us.

Child Labor Threatens.

Child labor threatens us with worse calamities than financial loss. It affects the family. A workman ought to receive a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. A fair wage is enough to support a family. The father is the wage-earner. That is old-fashioned, but true. Adult child labor, establish it, and you decrease adult wages. Some work can be done by children, and they are employed because they are cheap. If there are many children in the family, they are bound to go to work to support themselves. When each child supports himself, that is a species of individualism. The tendency is to disintegrate the family. Jimmie supports himself, Emily supports herself, Father supports himself, mother and the baby. Father does not get enough to go round. Do you see the significance of that state of affairs? The self-respecting workman says such conditions are unbearable. He refuses to marry, or the result is a race suicide. Child labor makes for the disintegration of the family.

It makes war on the rights of the child by depriving him of the privilege which is his of having a play age. It also plays havoc with his intellectual attainment by cheating him of his best years for learning rudimentary things. Child labor is robbery. It wrests away the rights of the child.

I dare say it is true—I am willing to confess—I look at most matters from the standpoint of the preacher. Child labor is a dreadful menace to the kingdom of God. Children are too rapidly, lose the innocence of childhood too quickly,

by promiscuous association with adults. I am not referring to the morals of factory workers. They are on an average above the average. I understand. I am thinking of something else. Mr. Spurgeon said he did not have grace enough to be pastor of a small church. I think he did, and so do we all, but that is what he said. The problem of the great church is peculiar, difficult and not to be underrated. But I am profoundly under conviction that the problem of the small church, though different, is more difficult. Do you know what it is to have young men and young women who would make useful workers in your churches, good servants of Jesus Christ, but they do not know how? Do you know what it is to have young people that you cannot train because they do not have in them that which responds to training? They have never read anything; they do not want to read; they do not know anything; they do not want to know; they have no ambition, they want to excel in nothing. Where are you to get your church officers from? Your Sunday-school teachers? Child labor is largely responsible for such conditions as these.

What is the remedy? Better legislation? Compulsory education? Yes, by all means. If you say that such laws interfere with the rights of parents, I wish to say that children have rights also, and the law should protect them in their rights. But above all, above all these protective and restrictive measures, wisely framed and enforced, and fearlessly enforced, let efforts be made to create a better public sentiment against child labor. Let pulpits and press, that mighty twin power for righteousness, speak out boldly. Let us say that to make dividends out of the labor of little children is a shame in the eyes of man and a sin in the sight of God.

WILMINGTON

WILMINGTON, N. C., January 26.—Two of the most pleasurable events of the week—in fact, two very brilliant events—were the January dances of the L'Arrose German Club and of Harmony Circle. The former was attended by fully three-score couples, and was exceptionally attractive as the prizes and favors were given. The German was led by Mr. Richard Bradley, and among the visitors were Miss Patterson, of Petersburg, Va., with Mr. Milton Calder, and Mrs. Willis, of Richmond, Va., with Mr. E. P. Bailey.

The dance of Harmony Circle was made complimentary to Mr. and Mrs. L. M. Baer, and at the midnight hour an elaborate supper was served. The special committee having in charge the delightful affair consisted of Messrs. L. W. Solomon, Gus Danabbaum and Irving Baer.

A charming visitor in the city, and one who has been the recipient of much attention, is Miss Ida Evans, of Warrenton, Va. She is the guest of Miss Jennie Murchison, and the present week Miss Murchison royally entertained at cards in her honor.

Another delightful event of the week was a reception given by Mrs. C. Oscar Baer at the cozy Blythe home, corner of Fourth and Dock streets, complimentary to her guest, Miss Bostwick.

The Ministering Circle of the King's Daughters gave an elegant tea in the handsome parlors of the Orton Hotel Tuesday afternoon and evening, and many of the city's most talented musicians added pleasure to the occasion. The annual supper was given by the charity ball for February 2d.

The L'Arrose Cotillion Club expects to give its January dance next Wednesday evening, and it will be a swell affair, being led by Mr. Paul Cantwell.

WARRENTON

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.) WARRENTON, VA., January 26.—Mrs. S. W. Maples entertained a few of her friends at a very informal luncheon on Tuesday last. Among those present were: Misses Virginia Vaughn, Emily Fletcher, Elise Sublett, Rose Tongue, Catherine

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DESKS FILING CASES

PHONE 1996

Sowers and others. Cards are out announcing the marriage of Miss Martha Washington Jennings to Dr. William D. Moritz on February 12th from the home of Mr. and Mrs. James E. McEvoy.

Mr. C. W. Smith, who was injured while jumping his horse at the Norfolk Horse Show in October, was brought home Tuesday of this week from Washington, where he has been since his removal from Richmond. His general health is in perfect condition, but there is little improvement in the movement of his limbs.

Miss Elizabeth Gaines left on Tuesday last for an extended trip North. While away she will visit in New York, Philadelphia, Boston and a number of the smaller cities.

Miss Ida Evans left on Monday for Wilmington, N. C., where she will be the guest of Miss Jennie Murchison, who has visited here a number of times. She will be gone until Easter.



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